

## Helsingin yliopisto - Helsingfors universitet - University of Helsinki ID 2002-1909

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Työn nimi-Arbetets titel-Title A social constructivist approach on Finland's EU policies in the 1990's			
Oppiaine-Läroämne-Subject International Politics			
Työn laji-Arbetets art-Level Master's thesis		Aika-Datum-Month and year 2002-11-29	Sivumäärä-Sidantal-Number of pages 79
<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>This study explores social constructivism as meta theory, and asks how it can be applied in studying the European Union (EU). The so called rationalist theories are often claimed to be insufficient in trying to account for the European integration. Thomas Banchoff has argued that social constructivist claims concerning the EU can be proved persuasive by using rigorous empirical research. He has created a two step analytical framework to show how state identity affects state action and successfully applied it to the German case. In this thesis his framework is applied to the Finnish EU policies in the 1990's.</p> <p>First part of the study defines social constructivism. The definition here is rather broad, based on the central ontological and epistemological presuppositions characteristic to social constructivism. The role of social constructivist meta theory in both foreign policy studies and in integration theories is discussed. The concept of collective identity and its relationship with interest formation are also touched upon here. The second part consists of the empirical analysis of the Finnish case. The analysis is carried out in two steps; first defining the important features of Finnish foreign policy identity, and then studying how this identity appeared in the official foreign policy discourse and decisions during the 1990's. In this study the impact of state identity on state action was not clear. The findings seem to indicate that the Finnish state identity was transformed to fit the state action, rather than action being influenced by identity. In light of these findings social constructivism cannot be proved persuasive by applying Banchoff's framework to the Finnish case. However, the depicted transformation of Finnish identity shows that important dynamics between identity and interest formation exist. Moreover, the findings indicate that the way Finnish EU decisions were made may have been facilitated by identity based political culture, making causalities run both ways.</p> <p>The source material of the thesis consists mainly of academic literature dealing with social constructivism, European studies and Finland's EU policies. Speeches made by Finnish presidents during the 1990's have been used as primary sources.</p>			
Avainsanat-Nyckelord-Keywords social constructivism European Union foreign policy - Finland - 1990's collective identity			
Säilytyspaikka-Förvaringsställe-Where deposited			
Muita tietoja-Övriga uppgifter-Additional information			